

# DCFS Weekly Update From the State Office

Friday, March 16, 2001

## Acting Director

*By Richard Anderson*

As the acting director, for whatever time it takes to find a new leader, I look forward to working with all of you, and continuing an unwavering commitment to our improvement as a division. Please have patience with me, as I will with you. The rest of the state office staff would ask for the same consideration. Many of you in the field are feeling the weight of the extra load. We have much common ground. Let's share the load together. Our strength as a division, and with our community partners, will always come through our shared goal of positive outcomes for children and families. Even when we find ourselves on different sides of an issue, or have differing opinions about how to approach the work, let's remember that we have much common ground in what we ultimately want for children and families. Let's make sure that we continue to work as a team to help those we serve reach their positive goals.

## Thanks to Ken

*By Richard Anderson*

This is a note of thanks to Ken Patterson for his courageous leadership and vision. I have heard even those who disagreed with Ken express their respect for the way he stood up for what he viewed as right. In his last official address to our division staff (at the supervisors' conference on March 7th), he referred to a recent book he had read on the building of the transcontinental railroad. In using one of his many talents of applying analogy, he talked of the difficulty of laying rails across the continent and the struggle for the invention of a curved rail to provide for an alteration in course. As the director, he began many projects that have strengthened us. In short, he forged a curved rail that provided a path to lead us to a greater focus on direct practice skills and initiated a "Milestone" marker that we will continue to implement and follow. Many of you have already wished him well in his continuing professional and personal endeavors. I can let you know that he will continue working in our field and has several offers of exciting opportunities in his future. Anyone that takes the job of the director of our division knows that this is a temporary position. There are fluctuating and diverse pressures on child welfare that make this so. The real stability of the organization cannot depend on a person or personality. Ken and I had a very beneficial working relationship, but it was always the work itself that was most meaningful. I thank him for what he brought to us.

## Unknown Ethnicity of Clients

*By Navina Forsythe*

There has been a sharp decline in recording clients' ethnicity in SAFE. In calendar year 2000, 31% of foster children, 60% of home-based clients (PSS, PSC, PSI, PFP, PFR, and CAR), and 48% of CPS victims had other/unknown marked as their ethnicity and Hispanic status.

There are two fields that must be completed in SAFE.

1. The "Ethnicity" field lists African-American, Caucasian, Asian, Pacific Islander, American Indian, and Other/Unknown). The only time Other/Unknown should be marked is:
  - The client is Hispanic, doesn't wish to be identified in one of the other categories, and Hispanic status is marked to yes; or
  - The clients on a CPS case are unable to be located and thus the worker truly does not know the ethnicity.All other cases should have a valid ethnicity (something besides other/unknown) marked.
2. The "Hispanic" field is a yes/no field that needs to be marked for every client.

Ethnicity is stored in this way to comply with federal regulations. Ethnicity on SCF and CPS victims and perpetrators is reported to the federal government and is used in an Annual Report to Congress each year. Additionally, there are research studies done on all case types for various reasons. For example, the Utah Foster Care Foundation is assessing needed foster families and is looking at ethnicity of foster children as one dimension.

These ethnicity fields need to be completed accurately upon opening a case. These fields can be recorded on the person tab in SAFE. We will continue to monitor these fields for improvement.

## Foster Care Citizen Reviews

*By Linda Wininger*

In the past several months I have received a couple of OCPO recommendations regarding our performance at the Foster Care Citizen Reviews. I would like to outline those concerns and gently remind you of what is expected when a case you have gets reviewed.

First, I want to acknowledge that these reviews are time consuming and sometimes intimidating. However, they are a part of the work we do and can have valuable returns. There are three points I want to emphasize regarding our interaction with the Foster Care Citizen Review Boards (FCCRB). If you will do these three things each time you are involved with the review, you will get about as good an experience with the review as possible.

- 1. Respond quickly when you receive the notice.** All you need to do is let the FCCRB know that the child is still in DCFS custody and if the time and date set for the review will work for you.
- 2. Get the documents to FCCRB on time.** The documents requested on the letter you receive from the FCCRB need to be in their hands three weeks before the review.
- 3. Attend the review.** Not only do you need to attend the review, but also you need to encourage others invited to attend. Valuable input is gained from each participant.

In speaking with Patricia Worthington, Kristen Lambert, and Donna Reilly from the FCCRB I learned that most reviews go quite well. The cases that OCPO investigated are not common and the incidents of below par performance on the part of our workers are not the norm. However, I am obligated to make you aware so that you can correct the problem if you know it exists. Here are a few things to note.

When you make out the list of whom to notify be sure it is complete. It is up to you to identify for the FCCRB just who to include in "interested parties." The most difficult of these groups to identify is the other relatives that should be included. There are usually interested extended family members who can offer valuable input in these reviews. It is important that you give the FCCRB the best information available when it comes to addresses and phone numbers for the people on your list. And don't forget the biological parents. Even those who are in jail need to be notified. They are often able to offer input in ways other than being right there in the room with the reviewers.

It is also important to provide the FCCRB with **all** relevant and useful documents pertaining to the case. Last year in the 2000 Legislative Session language was added to the statute regarding the FCCRB that require DCFS to make the entire case file available to the FCCRB. They have made it quite clear that they don't want all of that paper to sift through; however, the point is that they are entitled to it.

In my conversation with Patricia, Kristen, and Donna they asked that I make it a point to commend each of you for your active participation in the reviews. They emphasized that your work is of good quality and they do appreciate what you do. If you have any questions please drop me an e-mail or give me a call at 538-4100.

## Recent Decision from the Court of Appeals

*By Richard Anderson*

This is a brief note to inform all of you of the recent decision (received on March 12, 2000) from the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals, relating to the authority of the district court to continue jurisdiction and modification of the settlement agreement. This motion was filed in August of 1998, when the four years of the initial settlement agreement on "David C." ended. Remember, this is not about whether the Division is committed to system improvements and to the Milestone Plan. This is much more a matter of settling the jurisdictional issues between federal courts and states. It just so happens that the Division's agreement provided a case example to be addressed. It is now up to the Governor to determine if the issue will be taken to the Supreme Court. This note is merely for your information. It does not change our momentum or our goals. The Milestone Plan and the Practice Model within it contain Division and child welfare goals for enhanced performance and improved outcomes. We are committed to these goals.

# To Make Your Life Easier...Using SAFE Optimally

By Kim Pinnegar and Robert Lewis

## Check for Existing Records for a Person before Creating a New Record

Many workers are not aware that the Mainframe search is available through the Directory in SAFE. We continue to overburden our database with many duplicate person records, which slows down our system and makes our data much less accurate. We should be making a habit of checking the Mainframe each time before creating a new client record to add a person to a referral or case.



The Mainframe tab is located in the Directory on the fourth tab from the left. You can search by Name, Social Security Number (SSN), or Client ID. If you search by name, enter Last Name and a few letters of the first name. (Always remember to check various spellings, names, and alias's.) To search by SSN, omit dashes and for Client ID just type in the entire number.

You can then access PACMIS and USSDS information if there are indicators marked with a "Y." Just click on the buttons located on the bottom right-hand corner of the window.

When you determine you have the correct person, you can then go to Function, Copy Person to SAFE. After it has copied, it will leave open the person window. Just close it. Your client will now be in the SAFE Directory. You can pull them up by going to the SAFE Person/Client tab and searching. Then you can add them to your referral or case by clicking on the Function menu and following the Person Selector process.

All prior history (CP12) is on the USSDS button.

**For general comments, suggestions, or questions about the weekly updates, e-mail Carol Miller or call 801-538-4451.**

**For questions about policy or rules, e-mail Steve Bradford or call 801-538-8210.**

**For questions about SAFE, call the SAFE Help Desk at 801-538-4141.**